

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Western District of Texas

FILED

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CLERK US DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

BY

DEPUTY

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United States of America

v.

Maria Del Socorro Lopez

Case No.

A 11-m-130

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of June 9, 2011 in the county of Travis in the Western District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

Title 31, Section 5332 (a) (1)

Offense Description

Whoever, with the intent to evade a currency reporting requirement under section 5316, knowingly conceals more than \$10,000 in currency or other monetary instruments on the person of such individual or in any conveyance, articles of luggage, merchandise, or other container, and transports or transfers or attempts to transport or transfer such currency or monetary instruments from a place within the United States to a place outside of the United States, or from a place outside of the United States to a place within the United States, shall be guilty of a currency smuggling offense and subject to punishment pursuant to sub-section (b).

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

SEE AFFIDAVIT

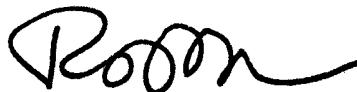
Continued on the attached sheet.


Complainant's signature

Elizabeth Chapman, Special Agent
Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 6/10/11


Judge's signature

City and state: Austin, Texas

Robert Pitman
Printed name and title

Affidavit

On June 9, 2011 Austin Police Drug interdiction Officer Roque Martinez was conducting traffic enforcement in the 200 block of N IH 35 South Bound, when he observed a Pickup Truck bearing Tennessee license plate B1284S pulling a trailer with the safety chains not properly secured. Officer Martinez initiated a traffic stop and identified the driver as Nabor Ochoa Torres of Tennessee. Officer Martinez noticed that the driver Ochoa and the front passenger Maria de Socorro Lopez were extremely nervous and visibly shaking. A third passenger, Veronica Lopez, adult daughter of Maria Lopez was in the truck along with her three young children. Officer Martinez received conflicting statements about their trip to Mexico from Tennessee and from training and experience recognized that the conflicting statements and extreme nervousness was consistent with persons illegally trafficking weapons and/or illegal drug proceeds. Officer Martinez then placed his narcotics detection dog "Tomi", on the truck and the trailer. The narcotics detection dog gave a positive alert for the presence or odor of narcotics coming from the truck. An initial search of the cab of the truck revealed that the passenger Maria Del Socorro Lopez was in possession of approximately \$15,646.00 in U.S. currency in her purse. A subsequent search of Lopez found that her body was wrapped with a home made body suit with U.S. Currency sewn into the material and her underwear totaling \$44,350.00. Lopez was also found to have U.S. Currency in her bra and shoes totaling \$11,881.00. Her daughter also had approximately \$5,520.00 in U.S. currency located in her purse. Austin Police Detective Prado interviewed Maria De Socorro Lopez on the roadside prior to her arrest and prior to locating the currency wrapped around her body. She stated that she lived in Nashville, Tennessee at 2902 Tuggle Ave and was on her way to San Luis in Mexico with her daughter and grandchildren. Nabor Ochoa was just a friend who was going to Mexico to visit his family. She stated that the money located within her purse was saved over a period of 13 years that she had been in the United States. She did not know how much she had but she was thinking of purchasing a property in Mexico for more than 50 thousand dollars. She admitted that she knew she had more than 10 thousand dollars in cash. She stated that 12 of those years she was in the United States illegally and her husband earned the money without ever reporting it to IRS. She stated she has never had a job or worked. Lopez stated she received residency in the U.S. approximately one year ago. A short while later a female Austin Police Officer arrived to search the both Lopez and her daughter. A modified material wrap (white sheet material) was found around Maria's body (stomach area) with sewn in custom pockets containing a large amount of U.S. currency. A total of approximately \$71,877 in U.S. currency was located on either Lopez's body and/or her purse.

Detective Prado informed her of her rights as per the Miranda ruling and she stated that Nabor Ochoa was the male driving her vehicle, pulling her trailer. They left Wednesday June 8th from Tennessee. They were stopped in Texas by police and told that they would need insurance to drive in Texas. She stated that she wrapped the money around her body to protect her money from the Zetas in Mexico. She admitted that in the past when she crossed the border into Mexico, they would not ask any questions. She again stated that that monies was from a life savings she had accumulated while she was in the US over the last 13 years. She stated she had never worked and listed 1500.00 in monthly bills. Her husband Efrain Lopez Ortiz earned about 700.00 per month. She bought the truck they were driving today from an auction in Kentucky for \$6000.00 in cash last week. The trailer is used for her husband's business.

Maria then stated her brothers worked to find her a travelling partner and that is how she met Nabor.

Detective Prado then interviewed Nabor and after informing him of his rights as per the Miranda Ruling Nabor stated that he was being paid 500.00 by Maria to drive her to and from Mexico. Maria is the one who had contacted him to hire him. This is his second trip and that his last trip was in December about 6 months ago. Nabor does not know her very well but does know that all of the property including the truck and trailer and everything in it is Maria's. He was not sure how long the trip would last.

Detective Prado then interviewed Veronica Lopez the daughter of Maria. Veronica stated that she was travelling with her mother but did not know anything about her mother's money and did not know her mother even had money. Veronica did recall her mother stating to her over a week ago that she was going to hide money on this trip.

Detective Prado then re-interviewed Maria and she admitted three other trips to Mexico in the last 6 months. She admitted that she took 7 thousand dollars on one of the trips.